

It is increasingly clear that media ownership has become another "vanity vehicle". A means of ensuring that a particular view -- and only that view -- is force-fed to its audience. The FCC has long held the media to a higher standard, consisting of balanced presentation and providing its audience the means by which to make intelligent, personal decisions.

It is this standard that I sincerely hope the FCC will maintain in the face of growing media consolidation. Consolidation that threatens to leave us with narrowing perspectives and few choices.

Take, for instance, Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary just days before the election without giving time to opposing views. This, in spite of the fact that Sinclair use the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. When large companies control the airwaves, their manipulation --often amounting to downright blackmail -- results in our getting a skewed perspective and the pap that they feel best serves their own interests, rather than the tools we need to actively participate in a vital democracy. It is critical that our news remain immediate and substantive whether it be local, national or global and not a pre-packaged version assembled by an anonymous entity whose aim is to tell us HOW we should think.

Sinclair's actions exemplify the necessity for strengthened media ownership rules, carefully drawn, to ensure that the quality standards that the FCC has so long championed, do not fall victim to power with us all the poorer.

Thank you for listening.